

BE A TREE!: Grow Your STEM-pathy



"So, be a tree. For together, we are a forest." —BE A TREE!

Did you feel a connection to trees as you explored the picture book **Be a Tree!**? Both the science and the beauty of this book might have grown your STEM-pathy. What is STEM-pathy?

Following your curiosity to discover the scientific details about trees and fungi and their impact (STEM) + feeling connected to another living being (empathy) = STEM-pathy.

STEM-pathy can help you learn and act for the benefit of the natural world and, thus, for all of us. Do you have STEM-pathy for trees? Author Maria Gianferrari offers us these ideas to help us act on your STEM-pathy. Use any of these or imagine some of your own.

FIVE WAYS TO HELP SAVE TREES

- 1) Recycle all paper products, and use fewer by:
 - Choosing cloth towels, napkins, and handkerchiefs instead of paper ones
 - Selecting recycled paper products wherever possible
 - Bringing a lunchbox instead of paper or plastic bags
 - Using cloth shopping bags rather than paper or plastic bags
- 2) Plant native trees and help preserve mature trees in your community.
- 3) Stage a community cleanup



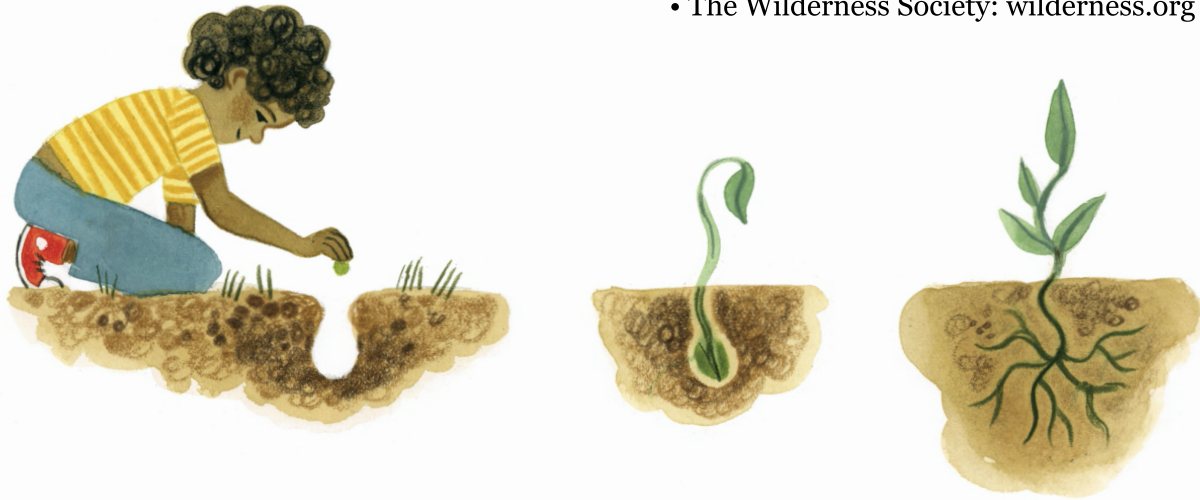
BE A TREE!: Grow Your STEM-pathy

FIVE WAYS TO HELP SAVE TREES (cont.)

4) Celebrate Arbor Day: arborday.org/celebrate

5) Host a fundraiser like a bake sale and donate the proceeds to an environmental organization. Here are some suggestions:

- Friends of the Earth International: foei.org
- Sierra Club: sierraclub.org
- The Nature Conservancy: nature.org
- The National Wildlife Federation: nwf.org
- The Wilderness Society: wilderness.org



BE THE FOREST: HOW TO HELP IN YOUR COMMUNITY

If you agree that "together, we are a forest," then your STEM-pathy (or simply empathy) can extend to your full community. Here are some ways you can build a forest of kind acts that supports your fellow humans.

- Visit with "grandfriends," residents at your local nursing home
- Set up a buddy system with the special needs program at your school
- Make care kits for homeless shelter residents including diapers, combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, razors, books, and other supplies
- Volunteer at your local animal shelter, or read to shelter dogs and cats
- Stage a supply drive for food, treats, toys, towels, and blankets for your local animal shelter
- Send cards to soldiers serving overseas
- Plant native flowers in your garden and neighborhood to attract birds, bees, and butterflies

What other ways can you be like a tree in your community?